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ABSTRACT

This issue reports on 19 research studies on Mexican American and Puerto Rican children. Research interest in Mexican American life and history is rising especially among Mexican American researchers. Seven separate research areas are discussed in this report; (1) history, (2) social mobility and assimilation, (3) community power, (4) reading problems, (5) Mexican American literature, (6) higher education, and (7) desegregation. The six historical works that are reviewed establish the historical nature of some important educational problems. One dominant theme is the economic decline of Mexican Americans while the larger economy expanded during the 19th century. Another theme concerns the language problem in school. Still another point of interest is the educational role of the Catholic Church. The problem of the educational quality of Mexican American schooling is a long standing one. The studies of social mobility and assimilation deal with topics such as income levels, occupational choice, and ethnic self-concept. Both historical and social mobility studies afford a glimpse into the operation of community power on a local scale. It is noted that political action by Mexican Americans is on its way to becoming a community norm in South Texas. The section on Puerto Rican education reports on a handful of studies that have appeared in the first few years. One is a government report which gives an overview of the principal problems of Puerto Rican communities on the mainland. In addition, other research studies concern the politics of education in New York City, language of instruction, and the issue of the cultural appropriateness or inappropriateness of standardized tests for minority children. (Author/AM)

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# Research Review of Equal Education


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# Introduction

This issue reports on nineteen research studies on Mexican American and Puerto Rican children. After the discussion of the individual studies, there are interpretive comments on them and on their implications for further research and practice. Much of it is based on recent doctoral dissertations. The next issue will include an analysis of recent research, including doctoral dissertations, on Indian American schooling.

We have intentionally not used a single term in this issue to refer to the groups being studied. Instead, we have used Chicanos, Mexicans, Mexicanos, Mexican Americans, or Spanish Americans because the various authors found that the people concerned preferred one or the other of these designations.

The first two issues of the *Research Review* have been published too close to one another to permit much time for readers to send in their suggestions or comments. We would greatly appreciate such correspondence. Meanwhile, readers will note that we have made a number of stylistic improvements which will add to the readability of this second issue.

We invite readers to subscribe to our new journal. We intend to adhere to a strict schedule of quarterly publication.

*The Editor*

# Mexican Americans

Research interest in Mexican American life and history is rising, especially among Mexican American researchers. Seven separate research areas are discussed in the following pages: (1) history, (2) social mobility and asssimilation, (3) community power, (4) reading problems, (5) Mexican American literature, (6) higher education, and (7) desegregation. Virtually all the studies are buried in doctoral dissertations, and few of their findings have yet found their way even into articles.

## History

Three works deal exclusively with the development of the Mexican American community in Los Angeles.

Griswold del Castillo discusses the impact of the American conquest of California (1846-1848) on the life of Spanish-speaking persons in Los Angeles in the years from 1850 to 1880. During this period, the group declined in economic and social position:[1]

> Their occupational structure stagnated as upward mobility into new occupations was limited and as older occupations declined. The bulk of the Spanish speaking experienced downward property mobility as their real and personal holdings dwindled in size and number. Due to discrimination and depression, upward socioeconomic mobility was severely limited and by 1880 the Chicanos were an economic minority.

In 1844, nearly three out of four working Chicanos were employed as unskilled laborers. The proportion remained essentially unchanged up to 1880.

Under American rule, the Chicano middle class remained underdeveloped and the tiny upper class declined in size. While the city, as a whole, developed an expanding economy, few of its fruits were shared by Chicanos.

A Spanish-language public school was permitted until 1853, but after that date all-English schools were organized; they were taught by Anglos. During the years 1850 to 1880, Chicano children made up from 25 to 40 percent of all students, comparable to the Anglo enrollment which ranged around 40 percent. Three times during the 1850s parents petitioned municipal authorities to conduct a bilingual

1. Richard Allan Griswold del Castillo, *La Raza Hispana Americana: The Emergence of an Urban Culture Among the Spanish Speaking of Los Angeles, 1850-1880* (doctoral diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 1974), pp. 63-64. (University Microfilms Order No. 74-18, 772).

school, but each time the request was turned down. In 1861, a Roman Catholic school was opened and conducted in both languages. In 1870, what Griswold calls "the first bilingual secondary school in the state was organized under Catholic auspices."[2] The public school board had only three Mexican American members over a period of 120 years.

Chicano literacy was low. In 1880, less than one-fourth of Spanish-speaking adults as compared to some 85 percent of the state, as a whole, were reportedly literate. Griswold stresses the non-comparability of Mexican Americans and European immigrants: "The Europeans came as landless foreigners hoping to adapt themselves to the American culture while the Chicanos were a conquered people who were forced to confront a foreign culture that had invaded their ancestral lands."[3] During the last half of the nineteenth century, Chicanos were all but excluded from public life. Three out of 194 lawyers admitted to the bar between 1887 and 1900 were Chicano. Between 1887 and 1896, only eight of over 2,000 persons on federal juries in Los Angeles had Spanish surnames.[4] Meanwhile as a reflection of their dissatisfaction, the equivalent of nearly one-fifth the entire Chicano population voluntarily returned to Mexico to stay during the period from 1850 to 1890.

A *barrio*, an area of concentrated Chicano residence, grew rapidly from 1850 to 1880. This was the obverse of another development: growing exclusion of Chicanos from Anglo society. By 1880, more than one-third of all Chicanos would have had to move in order to create a population distribution representative of the ethnic distribution of the city as a whole.[5] Chicano participation in politics was the property of "scions of the older families, who had proved their loyalty to the Anglo-American majority."[5]

The Catholic Church increasingly took on the appearance of a foreign church. Priests and prelates were Spanish, French, or Italian; none was Mexican. Church officials were oriented toward the wealthy and politically powerful. When a second Catholic Church was built in 1876, it became exclusively Anglo while the older church became Chicano. Informal religious elements prospered among the people, sometimes in secret. Spiritual healers, *curanderos*, operated widely near the surface of Chicano lower-class society. Fiestas, unsanctioned by the church, prospered.

Despite internal conflicts of economic class and social consciousness, the Chicanos developed "their own unique social responses which enabled them to survive as a culture."[6]

Ricardo Romo studied Los Angeles during the years 1915 to 1930, with special emphasis on the Mexican American worker. He noted, at the outset, a difficulty in discovering primary sources: "English-language newspapers such as the *Los Angeles Times* ignored much of the community activities of the Mexican population."[7]

2. *Ibid.*, p. 156. 3. *Ibid.*, p. 189. 4. *Ibid.*, p. 249.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 270. 6. *Ibid.*, p. 302.
7. Ricardo Romo, *Mexican Workers in the City: Los Angeles 1915-1930* (doctoral diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 1975), p. 19. (University Microfilm Order No. 76-1157).

As the central business district of the city grew, houses in adjacent poor neighborhoods were eliminated. Mexican American workers followed expanding industry into the suburbs where they established new *barrios* or *colonias*. Numerous third-generation workers who remained in the city were employed in white-collar pursuits. As Romo notes, however, all worked as clerks and "none in the ranks of proprietor, semi-professional, or professional ranks."[8] Indeed, he adds: "Only a small percentage of the first, second and third generation Mexicanos found opportunities in the skilled trades and professions."[9] There was little upward mobility.

Residential dispersion increased somewhat from 1918 to 1925 diminishing to some extent the cultural cohesiveness of the community. On the other hand, three institutions helped maintain that cohesion. One was the Mexican consulate which represented to many persons a protector against American injustice. Another was the Spanish-language press. A third was the great number of voluntary associations of a cultural, economic, self-help, and recreational character. The schools' Americanization program was a highly negative factor in developing community interests as it "attempted not only to change the Mexican's standard of living, without improving his income, but also to convince him to shed completely such cultural baggage as language and customs."[10]

Gilbert George Gonzalez studied the decade of the 1920s with a major emphasis on the public schools. He summarizes much of his work in a simple formulation: "For the Mexican child, a hostile, at times liberal, society looking forward found ways to socialize him or her but not necessarily to make the child a social equal."[11]

The twenties were a crucial period for the education of Chicano children. In the three years from 1923 to 1926 alone their proportion in the city's public schools rose from 8.8 to 11.5 percent.[12] Fatefully, the twenties also witnessed the blooming of the IQ test. Judging from the test results for 1928 to 1929, Gonzalez writes: "Nearly three-fourths of all children who scored below 70 were from either a foreign or semi-foreign neighborhood."[13] "Foreign" meant, of course, Mexican. After analysis of the 1931 test results, Gonzalez concluded: "There was a very high probability that nearly one-half of the Mexican children would find themselves placed in slow-learner rooms and development centers."[14]

How limited was the educational effect of development centers is underscored by Gonzalez's finding:[15]

> The development rooms produced unskilled labor for the economy. Of the 325 who graduated from the development centers in 1928-29, 65 were working in agriculture as fruit pickers, 60 sold newspapers, and the remainder scattered over a wide range of unskilled manual occupations.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 145. 9. *Ibid.*, pp.145-46. 10. *Ibid.*, p. 171.
11. Gilbert George Gonzalez, *The System of Public Education and Its Function Within the Chicano Communities, 1920-1930* (doctoral diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 1974), p. 121. (University Microfilm Order No. 75-9392).
12. *Ibid.*, p. 130. 13. *Ibid.*, p. 149.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 150. 15. *Ibid.*, p. 167.

These centers had their analogues in other cities and other minority groups.

Studies of Santa Barbara, California; Texas; and New Mexico have been made in three separate works.

Albert Michael Camarillo examined the development of the Chicano community in Santa Barbara from 1850 to 1930. During the first half or so of this period, Chicanos constituted considerably more than half the city's population. This fact was reflected in the schools.

The sparse public schooling available before 1855 had been conducted in Spanish only; an 1855 state ruling required English-only instruction. This meant little in Santa Barbara where the change produced a single English-only class for Anglo children. When financial stringencies brought about a merger of the two kinds of classes, bilingual instruction was to begin. Anglo parents, however, took their children out of the school where they represented only one-third of enrollment. In 1858, a parochial bilingual school was organized that permitted Anglo students to receive English instruction.

There was a confluence of strong forces in the Chicano community during the mid-1870s. A national economic depression affected Chicanos severely. The rising Anglo presence and domination in Santa Barbara brought new stresses. As the historic pastoral economy receded and was replaced by new industries and employments, the Chicano community found itself unprepared and unwelcome. Political and social isolation became the new norm. "After 1873," writes Camarillo, "political insignificance, occupational dislocation, residential segregation, social ostracism from Anglo society, and increasing impoverishment characterized the conditions of the evolving Chicano community. By 1890, the depressed socioeconomic and political position of the Spanish-surnamed people in Anglo Santa Barbara determined the status of the Chicano community for future generations."[16]

In 1874, for example, the boundaries of the heavily Chicano Third Ward were redrawn to make it even more Chicano, and city-wide elections were changed to ward elections. This minimized the impact of the Chicano vote. It is not surprising, therefore, that an Anglo mayor was elected for the first time in 1874. Soon, Chicanos lost nearly all direct governmental power. "Without political, judicial, and law enforcement representatives," writes Camarillo, "the Chicano people were defenseless against Anglo racism."[17] Anglo physical assaults upon Chicanos went unpunished.

In the 1880s, spreading poverty forced women and children into the labor market to supplement meager paternal incomes. They often replaced low-paid Chinese laborers as almond pickers and shellers. "Chicano children who worked in both [fall and winter] harvests were usually absent from school until February,"[18] writes Camarillo. Some picked olives. Orchard operators increased child employment,

16. Albert Michael Camarillo, *The Making of a Chicano Community: A History of the Chicanos in Santa Barbara, California, 1850-1930* (doctoral diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 1975), pp. 104-5.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 134. 18. *Ibid.*, p. 172.

despite state labor laws. In 1911, the California Labor Commission reported that "so many children [are] in the orchards that the schools were all but depopulated."[19] The state began to demand that operators cease their illegal use of child labor. "During the following walnut picking season," according to Camarillo, "the president of the Walnut Growers Association threatened to use Japanese labor if an extension of summer vacation was not granted to the native Chicanitos. The Growers Association obtained a decision from the Superior Court which in 1912 held that 'if a family pleaded hardship, children could work'."[20] Nine years later, the Association signed an agreement with the county school board permitting children of adult laborers to enroll temporarily in the Goleta schools; such children were allowed to work in the fields outside school hours.[21]

Ethnic separation inside Santa Barbara grew during the latter years of the period under study: "The Bath House or swimming pool located on the beach excluded Chicanos, especially the darker-skinned ones. Some of the theaters required, by rule or by gentle persuasion, that 'visible' Chicanos (the *prietos*) sit together with other people of color in a segregated section."[22] During the 1920s, members of the local Ku Klux Klan paraded brazenly through public streets, not even bothering to wear masks.[23]

Arnoldo De Leon studied Anglo racial attitudes toward Mexicanos in Texas from 1821 to 1900. Throughout this long period, dating from Mexico's revolt for independence from Spain, a firm racist conception of Mexicanos took shape among Anglo Texans. In DeLeon's words:[24]

> First, white men convinced themselves that Mexicanos were going nowhere. Then, placing a cultural gulf so vast between themselves and Mexicans, they determined that Mexicanos could never really get anywhere. And by speaking of Mexicans as lazy, indolent, stupid, ignorant, present-minded, and fun-loving, they justified the imposition of social mores that relegated Mexicans to a place outside the American cultural milieu. And then, blaming that subjugation on the Mexican nature itself, and thinking of Mexicanos as unworthy entities in this world of theirs, they took advantage of their "indolence" to insure white supremacy.

During these years, Anglo contempt led to widespread lynching of Mexicanos without any legal penalty. After an initial period of development, the Texas Rangers, according to De Leon, became "a legal corps that enjoyed the legal consent and tacit sanction of the white community to do to Mexicans what others were doing extralegally."[25]

Before the Civil War, *Tejanos* (Mexicans from Texas), in general opposed the institution of slavery and this became another issue of

19. *Ibid.*, p. 246. 20. *Ibid.* 21. *Ibid.*, pp. 246-47.
22. *Ibid.*, pp. 301-2. 23. *Ibid.*, p. 303.
24. Arnoldo De Leon, *White Racial Attitudes Toward Mexicanos in Texas, 1821-1900* (doctoral diss., Texas Christian University, 1974), pp. 91-92. (University Microfilms Order No. 75-3458).
25. *Ibid.*, p. 219.

conflict with the Anglos. In some cases they helped fugitive slaves to escape to Mexico. During the Civil War itself, Mexicanos, in cooperation with Federal soldiers, harassed Confederate troops. After the war, many Mexicanos regarded themselves as radicals in the reconstruction struggles. "They concurred," according to De Leon, "with Republican advocacy of general suffrage without distinction of race or color, and criticized the conservatives for their attempts to form a white man's party, especially as they were attempting it with the assistance of the privileged Mexican population, which, if successful, would disfranchise both the [poor] Mexican and black element."[26] (Eventually, blacks were disfranchised, but De Leon reports that disfranchisement of poor Mexicanos although "attempted many times, never came to pass."[27])

A spectacular event in 1894 placed a sudden strain on the long tradition of Mexicano-black cooperation. In that year, a riot broke out in Beeville between the two groups. For several years, blacks had been forced to compete against increasing numbers of unskilled Mexicano laborers willing to work for lower wages than the blacks received. Now, in the midst of a very severe national economic depression, blacks in Beeville protested in a raid upon a Mexicano living area. Whites, De Leon notes, supported the Mexicanos in the conflict.

In the eight decades after 1821, the Mexicano had come to be viewed as an inferior human being, fitted by his inferiority to work for exceedingly low wages. Segregation and substandard public services accompanied this seemingly fixed status.

Robert Johnson Rosenbaum has analyzed the course of Mexicano resistance to Anglo dominance in New Mexico during 1870-1900.

In San Miguel County an armed Mexicano resistance movement arose, known as *Las Gorras Blancas*, or the White Caps. It stood, if vaguely, for a defense of Mexicano cultural rights and against exploitation by Anglo or Mexicano elites. After the American conquest of 1846 to 1848, a small group of the latter had cooperated with Anglo governing forces. The Americans excelled in becoming office holders and organizing new kinds of economic enterprises. "Some powerful native New Mexicans," writes Rosenbaum, "were officers of banks, railroad corporations and mining companies. They probably gained these positions because of their political influence rather than their capital investment or technical expertise."[28]

The White Caps articulated a popular sentiment for ethnic solidarity while rejecting any racist conceptions. In Las Vegas, they posted a sign: "We are down on race issues, and will watch race agitators. We are all human brethren, under the same glorious flag."[29]

Education was another popular issue the White Caps dealt with. Public schools were all but unknown in the years from 1870 to 1900.

26. *Ibid.*, pp. 161-62. 27. *Ibid.*, p. 278.
28. Robert Johnson Rosenbaum, *Mexicano versus Americano: A Study of Hispanic-American Resistance to Anglo-American Control in New Mexico Territory, 1870-1900* (doctoral diss., University of Texas, 1972), p. 34. (University Microfilms Order No. 73-18, 492).
29. *Ibid.*, p. 163.

The few wealthy Mexicanos or *ricos* "sent their children to private schools in Santa Fé and perhaps on to St. Louis University or Notre Dame."[30] The two greatest obstacles to public education were not the poverty of New Mexico territory but the attitudes of the *ricos* and the Catholic Church. *"Educar un muchacho es perder un buen pastor"* – "To educate a boy is to lose a good shepherd" – said one *rico*. Nor did the aristocratic *ricos* wish to help pay for educating the poor.

To the Catholic hierarchy, public education was Protestant – i.e., non-Catholic – and thus repulsive. Catholic prelates lobbied successfully against the creation of a meaningful public school system. Archbishop J. B. Salpointe charged that nonsectarian schooling was "in reality either sectarian, non-religious, godless, or agnostic."[32] All were equally bad. Protestant zealots, for their part, were no less dogmatic. W. S. Burke, editor of the *Albuquerque Daily Journal*, equated the Catholic Church with the practice of polygamy in nearby Utah: "They require precisely the same treatment, and there are but two remedies – the one being the sword and the other the schoolhouse. I favor the latter as more consonant with our institution, our religion and our civilization."[33]

In time, according to Rosenbaum, the advent of state-financed public schools had less to do with the White Caps than with three factors unrelated to the protestors. One was the eagerness of territorial leaders to gain congressional approval for statehood; low literacy rates were among the criticisms congressmen brought up in early attempts at statehood. Another was the rising demand for schools voiced by Anglos as they settled in the territory. Still another were the attractions of patronage opportunities to be had in a state-wide system of public education.

It is all but impossible to "summarize" six historical works in a few pages. The six works, however, share certain characteristics. They deal with principal areas of Mexican American settlement (California, Texas, and New Mexico) and thus are representative in a geographical sense. A central emphasis is the subordinate economic and political position of Mexican Americans in the community; each also touches on the presence of a very small privileged sub-group. Education is portrayed as heavily dependent on the social structure of the given area. Segregation and planned deprivation in the schools were part of community-wide patterns. Each study is concerned fundamentally with understanding how – or whether – the contemporary Mexican American culture evolved from the historic Mexicano experience.

Most of the six researchers document to a degree the persistence of Mexicano cultural patterns well after the midcentury American conquest. At the same time, they stress the effect of racism in stimulating an in-group feeling. Griswold del Castillo declares: "Had the development of Spanish-speaking culture depended only on

30. *Ibid.*, p. 187. 31. *Ibid.*, p. 253.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 252.
33. W. S. Burke to Sen. George T. Edmunds, December 21, 1883, in *ibid* footnote 34, p. 254.

persecution . . . . it would have disappeared in a short time."[34] Yet, without exception, the six researchers devote far more space to persecution than to cultural life. Consequently, their accounts of culture sometimes strike the reader as ethnology without ethnography. But in the main, their accounts add greatly to the reader's understanding of the evolution of modern Mexican Americans and their efforts to educate their children.

## Social Mobility and Assimilation

Throughout the historical works reviewed above, the topics of social mobility and assimilation are frequently linked. In New Mexico territory, for example, a tiny group of affluent Mexicanos was accepted by Anglo elites and, in time, came to resemble the new dominant forces in that nineteenth century society. At the same time, it is observed that the historic culture persisted among the poorest Mexicanos. In other words, upward social mobility is associated with the discarding of Mexicano ways. In the absence of detailed historical studies of this process we are able only to examine several social science explorations of the contemporary scene. Researchers have studied this subject in California, Arizona, Texas, and New Mexico.

Two studies concern Arizona, one in Tucson, the other in Phoenix.

Jacqueline Joann Taylor, in Tucson, addressed two questions: "(1) What happens to ethnicity in an upwardly mobile population of definable ethnics? (2) Is there an ethnic mobility system which differs in some respects from the dominant mobility system?" She interviewed thirty-five upwardly mobile Mexican Americans and a slightly larger group of Mexican American university students. While Mexican Americans in Tucson make up nearly one-sixth of the population, about three-quarters of them live in a fairly concentrated area.

The older sample of thirty-five persons was not typical of the city's Mexican Americans. Two-thirds were college graduates; another six had some college. A third were educators. Two-thirds of their parents had been skilled or unskilled laborers.

Of the thirty-five, twenty-one grew up in Tucson. Their experience in the public schools was not encouraging, as Taylor points out:[35]

> In elementary school, many had experiences – which are vividly remembered to this day – of being punished or humiliated by Anglo teachers for using Spanish in class or on the playground. Many regarded Anglo teachers with some apprehension.

The high schools had not been any more pleasant:

> Many of the urban residents spoke of school counseling as discouraging. Several . . . had been put on vocational tracks and . . . told . . . they were not college material . . . . The urban high schools . . . . did not provide a milieu that encour-

34. Griswold del Castillo, *La Raza Hispana Americana*, p. 302.
35. Jacqueline Joann Taylor, *Ethnic Identity and Upward Mobility of Mexican Americans in Tucson* (doctoral diss., University of Arizona, 1973), p. 162. (University Microfilms Order No. 74-11, 464).

> aged achievement . . . . The incidence of tracking or counseling [for] vocational training was . . . highest among women . . . . Other factors . . . include[ed] segregation, which was reinforced by the school counseling program, and limited participation of Mexican Americans in extracurricular activities and student government.

During their late adolescence, their prevailing educational goal was to complete high school and thereby gain a "steady job."

The upwardly mobile group was divided equally on the importance of speaking Spanish. Since they live all over the city, "mothers must make an effort to find Spanish-speaking playmates for their children."[37] For a number of mobile persons, a traditional loyalty to family remains so strong that it moderates the mobility:[38]

> In order to take full advantage of wider opportunities, Mexican Americans may have to move to other urban areas. Many are unwilling to leave their families, particularly aging parents. In not becoming geographically mobile, they limit occupational chances to some extent.

It is these less mobile persons who tend more to maintain Mexican customs and visit Mexico with some frequency.

"Being Mexican" is not necessarily regarded as a limitation on mobility. Those of darker skin seemed at least as mobile as persons of lighter hue. As Taylor points out: ". . . Confident Mexican Americans who perceive themselves as visibly ethnic may be high achievers and may seek public office or other conspicuous positions."[39]

The sample of Mexican American college students differs significantly from the other group surveyed. Over a third of them, for example, graduated from parochial schools; in the first group only one-fifth did. Eight out of ten had siblings attending college. At the same time, nearly nine out of ten had fathers who were skilled or unskilled laborers, or worked in service or sales occupations. In the city as a whole in 1970, somewhat over one-ninth of the Spanish-surnamed population had completed one or more years of college. In the college sample group, however, nearly all had friends who were also college students. At the university, where until the 1960s, Mexican American students were excluded from fraternities or sororities, they are now permitted to join with Anglos. Taylor doubts that this means the end of discrimination on campus: "The climate of the university is different for Mexican Americans than it is for Anglos."[40]

Taylor concludes that Mexican Americans' upward mobility, at least in a moderated form, is not inconsistent with their ethnic identity. Adjustments in career choices, though they bring higher incomes and more interaction with Anglos, also are made in the interest of maintaining ethnic ties. Thus, assimilation is not necessarily the end of the road for those seeking a higher social status. The mobility system of Tucson's upwardly mobile Mexican Americans is distinctive. Its goals are modest and its approach genteel.

36. *Ibid.*, pp. 160-61. 37. *Ibid.*, p. 136. 38. *Ibid.*, p. 123.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 185. 40. *Ibid.*, p. 205.

Eugene Acosta Marin studied certain aspects of the Mexican American community in Phoenix. He was interested in its relations with the Anglo community as well as in its internal divisions. The sample was made up of 417 Mexican Americans who were active in ten civic organizations and 375 Anglos who represented the dominant social group in the city's affairs. Over half the former and over three-quarters of the latter were college graduates. Three-fifths of the Mexican American sample had attended a grade school which was entirely or predominantly Mexican American. Nearly all the Anglo leaders had attended grade schools in which there were few or no Mexican Americans. On the whole, there was a high degree of correspondence between the political attitudes of the two samples. When asked whether it was advisable to allow more Mexicans to enter the country to seek jobs, half the Mexican Americans and three-quarters of the Anglos answered in the negative. To a question about the advisability of greater political cooperation between Mexican Americans, blacks, and American Indians, over four-fifths of the Anglos and about three-fifths of the Mexican Americans replied in the negative.

An internal division revolved around the matter of a label, as between "Chicano" and "Mexican American." The division was substantial and not a mere matter of words. Acosta Marin reports that self-designated " 'Chicanos' see social unrest as desirable and advantageous to the aggrandizement of Mexican Americans, but 'Mexican Americans' see social unrest as undesirable."[41] Those in the sample identifying themselves as "Mexican Americans" tended to be older and were more favorably inclined toward Anglos. Acosta Marin regards the internal split as of secondary importance. In all, then, the study shows little if any possible casual interrelationship between upward social mobility and assimilation.

Patterns of social mobility among middle-class Mexican Americans in four Texas cities were analyzed by Raymond Herman Charles Teske, Jr. He studied 151 subjects in Waco, McAllen, Austin, and Lubbock and found that upward social mobility had occurred mainly in the second or third generation. Well over half the respondents were the first in their families to have achieved middle-class status; more than eight out of ten came from lower class or working class families. In all four cities, upwardly mobile middle class persons tended to identify more strongly with and interact more with members of their ethnic group the more they perceived prejudice and discrimination against their group.

Social mobility was found to be related to perception of discrimination. Teske reports that "in communities where there is a limited middle-class Mexican American population and relatively greater perceived prejudice and discrimination by Anglos, the rates of upward

41. Eugene Acosta Marin, *The Mexican American Community and the Leadership of the Dominant Society in Arizona: A Study of the Mutual Attitudes and Perceptions* (doctoral diss., United States International University, 1973), p. 179. (University Microfilms Order No. 73-16, 759).

mobility are comparatively lower."[42] City-to-city differences were apparent in numerous measures. This led Teske to deny the existence of a general pattern of collective assimilation for middle class persons nor could he find any evidence of a distinctive middle-class Mexican American subculture as such. (The finding could hardly be otherwise since no class group other than middle class was studied. Therefore, no comparative conclusion can be reached.)

Nevertheless, certain principles were evident in Teske's data. The likelihood of a young Mexican American leaning toward assimilation into Anglo society was heightened when that person had understood English upon entering school or lacked a Spanish accent. "Looking Mexican" operated against assimilation. The ethnic character of childhood playmates was of some significance in determining assimilation in later life.

Actually, Teske writes not of assimilation as such but of three separate scales constituting a measure of assimilation. These are interaction with Mexican Americans, interaction with Anglos, and Mexican American identity. Responses from the 151 interviewees are broken down by four cities on three scales. The whole picture becomes highly complex and fractionated. Characteristics are true of one scale in one of the cities but not of another scale in the same city. No wonder that Teske arrives at very few general findings on the issue of status mobility and assimilation.

Diane Adele Trombetta Reynolds, in a study in San Jose, California, considered the "relationship between the economic integration of a Mexican American individual in U.S. urban society . . . and his acculturation and assimilation to U.S. society and culture as a whole."[43] She studied twenty-four persons of Mexican American background, aged 18 to 25 years, who were enrolled in a single job rehabilitation program; and ten staff members in the same program. Each informant was interviewed for four hours.

Trombetta Reynolds found that there was no consistent relationship between economic adaptation and cultural assimilation. Staff members had "made it" economically, and in many respects such as language, dress and recreation, they were assimilated. Yet, "in the areas of social interaction, intermarriage, models for behavior, personal friendships, and articulated values, ties to Mexican ethnicity are strong and apparent."[44] She concluded that upwardly mobile individuals "will assimilate behaviorally and ideologically in areas they perceive necessary to such success."[45]

The students whose average age was almost twenty, were apparently downwardly mobile. Fifteen of the twenty-four had blue-collar fathers and one or more parents had supported the families regularly. But the students were chronically unemployed. While the program

42. Raymond Herman Charles Teske, Jr., *An Analysis of Status Mobility Patterns Among Middle-Class Mexicans in Texas* (doctoral diss., Texas A&M University, 1973), p. 185. (University Microfilms Order No. 74-13, 110).
43. Diane Adele Trombetta Reynolds, *Economic Integration and Cultural Assimilation: Mexican-Americans in San Jose* (doctoral diss., Stanford University, 1974), p. 21. (University Microfilms Order No. 74-27, 093).
44. *Ibid.*, p. 54. 45. *Ibid.*, p. 80.

formally aimed at job rehabilitation, students viewed it as "easy money." They had only to attend and collect their stipend. One could hardly speak of the students seeking any "place in society other than as a way of survival." This fact had no connection with their ethnic character except for the probable discrimination experienced by them in their earlier job searches.

The researcher reached an unusual conclusion about the staff. She noted that they "emphasized . . . their desire to be accepted and treated by everyone as individual persons rather than primarily as Mexican Americans."[46] This led her "to believe that with elimination of social and economic barriers to participation with Anglo Americans, these staff members and others like them would be likely to lose many of the ethnic ties they now maintain."[47] Already, she holds, the informants are highly acculturated. The future may well complete the process. (Too much faith, however, should not be lodged in the future. David Emmett Hayes-Bautista has studied a process of "disassimilation" whereby young medical professionals in training, who had little consciousness of being Chicano, go on to develop just such a new self-conception.)[48]

Thomas R. Lopez, Jr. presents the most pessimistic, but probably a realistic, perspective on prospects for the Spanish American culture in New Mexico. He stresses the need to confront the great poverty of Spanish Americans rather than what he calls a "sentimental commitment to preserving a culture apart from solving . . . dire economic problems . . . ."[49] The Roman Catholic Church, one of the historic bases of traditional culture in New Mexico, is, according to Lopez, shunting the poor aside:[50]

> Spanish Americans are among the least able to pay tuition costs or financially support the parishes and [parochial] schools; the schools particularly are rapidly becoming the domain of middle-class, Catholic Anglos . . . It would appear that the Spanish American population on the basis of financial considerations . . . [is] being "written off" . . . by parochial schools . . . .

The Spanish American poor, Lopez writes, are hardly interested in the problems of retaining a particular "culture" but are consumed by their economic problems. He holds that the principal sustaining force of traditional culture in the state is the social and geographical isolation of the people. "The pervasive and continuing isolation of Spanish Americans," declares Lopez, "may be attributable to two interrelated factors: economic deprivation and racism, i.e., the complex of attitudes and practices which make ethnic and racial consideration important in society."[51] As the geographical isolation gives way before urbanization, it is replaced by ethnic segregation in the schools

46. *Ibid.*, p. 140. 47. *Ibid.*
48. David Emmett Hayes-Bautista, *Becoming Chicano: A "Dis-Assimilation" Theory of Transformation of Ethnic Identity* (doctoral diss., University of California, San Francisco [San Francisco Medical Center], 1974). (University Microfilms Order No. 74-4708).
49. Thomas R. Lopez, Jr., *Prospects for the Spanish American Culture of New Mexico: An Educational View* (doctoral diss., University of New Mexico, 1971), p. 240. (University Microfilms Order No. 72-30, 759).
50. *Ibid.*, p. 245. 51. *Ibid.*, p. 274.

and other urban institutions. Willy-nilly, therefore, the future of traditional culture will be secure, predicts Lopez, because of "(1) the absence of a national commitment to eliminate poverty and (2) the failure to foster human diversity and cultural pluralism seriously and deliberately."[52] Yet, even within this bleak context, he believes "schools can positively contribute to American pluralism by being models of pluralism through a professional commitment to educating children for competence across cultures."[53]

## Community Power

About 75 miles south of San Antonio, Texas and about 125 miles north of the Mexican border lie the towns of Pearsall and Cotulla. Pearsall, with a 1970 population of 11,159, and Cotulla, with 15,014 people, are some 25 miles apart. The population of the county in which Pearsall is located is over two-thirds Mexican American, and that of the county in which Cotulla is located is over three-fourths Mexican American. Between November 1972 and January 1974, Donald Post studied the efforts of Anglos and Mexican Americans to retain or gain control over the public schools in the towns. He interviewed 146 persons.

The schools in both towns have done little for Mexican Americans whose academic achievement lags two or three years behind that of Anglos. "The school system" Post writes, "primarily operates on behalf of an Anglo minority. This further enhances the Anglo dominance of the economic sphere and retards the Spanish-surnames' involvement socially and economically . . . ."[54] Anglo dominance was traditional inside the schools, as well. In Cotulla, for example, until the late 1960s when Mexican Americans became the majority element in the high school, they were all but excluded from certain key student extracurricular activities. In Pearsall's high school, "Anglos continued to control the organizational sector of school life,"[55] even into the early 1970s, although Mexican Americans had for more than two decades been the majority. A school board rule forbidding the use of Spanish on the campus was not deleted until June 1972.

Historically, the Anglos were dominant in economic life, comprising almost all the landowners. Mexican Americans were primarily low-paid laborers on farms. Economic and political subordination was nearly complete. Extreme poverty was widespread; nearly four out of ten families in Cotulla were on welfare. The city council was traditionally Anglo until the 1970s. The few Mexican American businessmen who were invited to join the Pearsall Rotary Club and the Chamber of Commerce, Post observed, "exhibited subordinate behavior when in the presence of Anglos, that is, . . . downcast eyes, excessive amount of smiling, agreeability, humbleness, and so forth."[56]

52. *Ibid.*, p. 275. 53. *Ibid.*, p. 294.
54. Donald Eugene Post, *Ethnic Competition for Control of Schools in Two South Texas Towns* (doctoral diss., University of Texas, 1974), p. 119. (University Microfilms Order No. 76-7984).
55. *Ibid.*, p. 120. 56. *Ibid.*, pp. 150-51.

Mexican American elementary schools were traditionally segregated; one, in Pearsall, remained segregated until 1970. Post reports:[57]

> Some informants described the manner in which, historically, Anglos allocated the "used" school resources to the Mexican American and black schools. In the board minutes for September 1953, the board sent used desks to the black school. Mexicanos point out that in the past if they "accidentally" got a good teacher from out-of-town, that teacher was inevitably transferred to the Anglo school.

None of the respondents could recall a time when the elementary schools were not segregated.

Anglo control of the Pearsall schools is still effective and pervasive, although, as discussed below, it is being challenged. Mexican Americans usually regard the public schools as "their schools," i.e., as belonging to the Anglos. Drawing on his interviews, Post describes several examples:[58]

> The Mexican American school leaders are aware that local Anglos make the least desirable teachers for Mexican children because they tend to broker local Anglo culture regarding Anglo cultural superiority, yet these teachers are given preference in hiring . . . . Mexican Americans tell numerous stories concerning the covert, and overt, manners in which Mexican American students have been told they are dumb . . . . When the Mexican Americans acquired a plurality of the [high school] student body [the Anglo response] was to create a parallel system of awards . . . To parallel the elite status of Mr. and Mrs. Pearsall High School the Anglos set up a Señor and Señorita position. In 1968 the Mexican American students refused to participate in this process and it was dropped.

During the 1960s, Anglo control of the schools began to weaken under the combined impact of two sets of powerful forces. The first was the new federal school legislation with accompanying mandatory guidelines. This legislation included compensatory education as well as desegregation. State regulation became more stringent as the Texas Education Agency was compelled, for financial reasons, to exercise closer supervision. Moreover, in a sweeping statewide decision of a desegregation case in which it was a plaintiff, the Texas Education Agency was designated as agent of the federal court to monitor the implementation of the court's order. A new statewide teachers' organization made itself felt on new state legislation. A second set of forces can be summed up as the rise of Mexican American leadership. The latter was still being exercised haltingly in Pearsall late into 1973.

Cotulla's schools have not differed appreciably from those of Pearsall. Before World War II, there seemed little point in young Mexican Americans attending high school and less so college, but today the situation has changed a great deal. Post states: "It would be safe to describe the contemporary Mexican American parental population as viewing schooling as the most viable means to upward social and

57. *Ibid.*, p. 168. 58. *Ibid.*, pp. 182-83. 59. *Ibid.*, p. 230.

economic mobility."[59] Most Mexican American teachers in Cotulla are reported to see their role as one of accommodating assimilation of their students into the Anglo system rather than as fostering the development of an autonomous cultural group.

Changes in the traditional order were brokered by two groups in Cotulla: veterans from World War II and migrant laborers. The former were less willing to resume their historical roles, having experienced more egalitarian treatment in the armed forces. Migrant laborers were economically dependent on the Anglos but they were not permanent parts of the local social order. Thus, they were freer to strike out in independent political directions. Also, an important external impetus to collective action came from Crystal City, a nearby town where Chicanos had formed La Raza Unida Party (RUP) and had brought about a complete change in control of the city government and school board. As early as 1969, RUP members began visiting Cotulla regularly. They "conducted rallies and staged dramas depicting local Anglos as oppressors . . . ."[60]

In 1970, the Cotulla RUP's mayoral candidate won along with several city council candidates. Two RUP school board members were also elected; two years later, another two joined the board. So tense was the atmosphere during the 1972 elections that the high school employed police to patrol the halls in order to prevent physical violence between Chicanos and Anglo students. Elections the following year swept all RUP candidates out of city office.

Prior to 1973, writes Post, "most Anglos in Pearsall believed that 'their Mexicans' were not like those of Crystal City."[61] That year, however, for the first time in the town's history, Mexican Americans ran candidates for a range of offices, won two school board positions, and almost gained the mayorality. As in Cotulla, the tenseness of the political confrontation was reflected in student behavior inside the schools.

"School leaders," observes Post, "are the subordinates within a local power domain."[62] As the ethnic conflict sharpened in both towns, school officials toed the line and had less latitude to express their own views and enforce their own policies. But Post also comments that the Chicano students in Cotulla may well complete the task begun by their elders. When he had finished his study, it appeared to Post that the students were well on their way to mobilizing Mexican American voters to capture the school board.

## Reading Problems

Edward Joseph Casavantes, who was a Social Science Analyst for the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights' Mexican American Education Study, explored various aspects of reading achievement and non-promotion policies for Mexican American and black students. (Unfortunately, the reading scores used by Casavantes are only principals' estimates but he believed there was a high probability of accuracy.)

60. *Ibid.*, p. 264. 61. *Ibid.*, p. 293. 62. *Ibid.*, p. 422.

"It can *conservatively be said*," contends Casavantes, "that two years of effective achievement can be subtracted from the 'year of education' figures of the census to arrive at a more accurate picture of the true educational level of Chicanos today."[63] In Texas, even among those Chicano students who remained in high school after 47 percent of their Chicano classmates dropped out, nearly two out of three read below grade level.

Casavantes doubts that anything of educational value was gained by holding back low-scoring minority students. In Texas, for example, the nonpromotion rate for Chicano children in grade four is half again as large as the rate in California. Yet, the California children do not read any more poorly than Texas youngsters. In both states, Mexican American children are nonpromoted at a higher rate than Anglo children. Casavantes notes that in the literature of non-promotion he failed to find a single study of the subject that deals with minority children.

Researchers have studied the frequently-observed drop in academic achievement over the school summer vacation. A common finding is that children from poor homes often suffer the greatest loss. Andrea Frieder-Vierra investigated the issue in Albuquerque, New Mexico. She was interested in minority and non-minority children, but in addition divided the former into those who lived in the *barrio* and those who did not. Finally, all the children were analyzed in terms of income group. A total of 746 Chicano and Anglo fourth, fifth, and sixth graders made up the sample. The study was conducted during the 1972-1973 school year. There were too few low income Anglo children to compare with the more plentiful low income Chicano children.

Specifically, Frieder-Vierra wanted to know whether "the difference in reading achievement between certain groups of children increases more rapidly over the summer than during the school year."[64] Assuming, in other words, the lag between Anglo and Chicano; did it grow worse over the summer? She predicted that "poverty and ghettoization [i.e., living in the *barrio*] would produce more difference than ethnicity itself."

As it turned out, the ethnic factor was quite secondary in importance; level of income was hardly more important; but residence in the *barrio* seemed highly significant. Taking low-income Chicanos, Frieder-Vierra found "their scores at any single point in time as considerably higher if they reside outside the *barrios*." The advantage is considerable: "The reading performance of low-income non-*barrio* Chicano children benefits more than that of any group from exposure to school and does not suffer any loss relative to other children during the summer vacation period. Their *barrio* counterparts, however, do much less well while in school but more than make up for that relative

63. Edward Joseph Casavantes, *Reading Achievement and In-Grade Retention Rate Differentials for Mexican-American and Black Students in Selected States of the Southwest* (doctoral diss., University of Southern California, 1973), (emphasis in original). (University Microfilms Order No. 74-28, 425).
64. Andrea Frieder-Vierra, *School-Year and Summer Reading Growth of Minority and Non-Minority Children in Albuquerque, New Mexico* (doctoral diss., University of New Mexico, 1975), p. 45. (University Microfilms Order No. 76-7957).

loss during the summer."[65] It is not clear just why the *barrio* Chicanos experience a relative summer gain.

Middle-class non-*barrio* Chicanos score lower than Anglos but resemble closely their pattern of learning during the entire year. Both hold their own. Middle class *barrio* Chicanos also gain over the summer. Frieder-Vierra stresses that "the group that gains the most on an annual basis . . . is the low-income non-*barrio* Chicanos and, contrary to the picture for their *barrio* counterparts, almost all of this improvement in relative standing is made during the school years."[66]

Frieder-Vierra draws a rather sweeping and stimulating conclusion from the findings:[67]

> . . . Some dimensions of minority status seem more amenable to the schools' intervention than others. In Albuquerque, school is only successful in increasing the reading achievement of Chicano children relative to Anglo children when they are not socially isolated. Poverty itself does not seem to be a barrier; school closes the gap for poor Chicano children, as long as they do not reside in the *barrio*.

It should be recalled that we are not speaking here of the year-round gap between Anglo and Chicano children which is sizable, but of the gap in achievement between the end of the spring semester and the opening of the fall semester. In other words, while the achievement of non-*barrio* poor Chicanos and middle-income Chicanos who live in the *barrio* is relatively high during the school year, low-income Chicano *barrio* residents do poorly during the school year but, for some reason, do not suffer from being out of school, or suffer less than the others. Frieder-Vierra states that having poor *barrio* children attend summer school will not necessarily narrow any achievement gap. The research is thin on this question.

## Mexican American Literature

Albert Dwight Trevino studied the place of Mexican American literature in high school English programs in Texas. He found no mention of Mexican American literature in state-adopted literature textbooks. A guideline issued by the Texas Education Agency does provide that "the State Textbook Committee shall choose a minimum of two textbooks at each level which shall be a departure from the regular anthology and shall be designed especially for students who have difficulty in the regular literature program."[68] It is stipulated further that such literature "should be of a type with which cultural minorities can identify strongly, shall be representative of the cultural patterns of minority groups, and should contain numerous selections written from the point of view of the minority groups." Trevino objects to conceiving of minority literature as appropriate

65. *Ibid.*, p. 57. 66. *Ibid.*, p. 58. 67. *Ibid.*, p. 99.
68. Albert Dwight Trevino, *Mexican-American Literature in the High School English Program: A Theoretical and Practical Approach* (doctoral diss., University of Texas, 1974), p. 8. (University Microfilms Order No. 75-4468).

only to students not performing up to standard in the literature program. Apparently, students performing satisfactorily are "above" minority literature. Upon examining two textbooks prepared in accordance with the above-listed guidlines, Trevino found them seriously wanting. Only one of the books contained a single Mexican American selection, and that was an autobiographical sketch by Pancho Gonzalez, the tennis star. Thus, there were not "numerous selections" nor could the Gonzalez entry be properly regarded as "representative of the cultural patterns" of Mexican Americans.

Trevino outlines a curriculum, consisting of short stories, poetry and novels, for Mexican American literature in integrated high school classes.

Dorothy Clauser Moyer studied children's fiction and non-fiction books about Mexico and Mexican Americans published in this country between 1925 and 1971. "None of the early books about Mexicans in the United States," she writes, "depicted them as members of a recognized minority group. . . . . Even in books since 1961 there have been only a few stories about Mexican Americans as a minority group and only a few informational books which include descriptions of the minority group."[69] More recently, Moyer found a considerable improvement both in fiction and non-fiction, yet she concluded that "numerous . . . . books portray Mexico and Mexican Americans in a stereotyped, patronizing manner." Moyer includes in her work a 167-page bibliography of the works she reviewed. It is a valuable starting point for work in the area.

## Higher Education

Carlos Arce has made one of the few studies of the role of Chicanos in higher education.[70] He analyzes that role in terms of "academic colonialism." In broad fashion he defines his concept:[71]

> Academic colonialism is the selective imposition of intellectual premises, concepts, methods, institutions, and related organizations on a subordinate group and/or the unselective and uncritical adoption and imitation of these premises by selected members of a subordinate group, with the selection processes not being in the control of the subordinate group.

The definition also embraces the "monopolizing by the dominant group of the resources for academic enterprise such as colleges and universities, foundation and government funding agency review boards, journals and other publishing outlets and the provision to the subordinate minority of only limited and controlled access to these measures."

According to Arce, Chicano life and scholarship fail to receive serious study and sustenance chiefly because of academic colonialism.

69. Dorothy Clauser Moyer, *The Growth and Development of Children's Books About Mexico and Mexican Americans* (doctoral diss., Lehigh University, 1974), p. 181. (University Microfilms Order No. 74-21, 432).
70. Carlos H. Arce, "Chicanos in Higher Education," *Integrateducation* 14 (May-June 1976), 14-18.

Despite rising trends in college enrollment for Chicanos, Arce notes that the gap between Chicano enrollment and that of Anglos and blacks has increased, at least for the crucial 20-24 year old group. At present, the proportions of this age group completing at least one year of college are 17 percent (Chicanos), 27 percent (blacks), and 43 percent (Anglos). This means that the future supply of Chicano researchers and academics is small and failing even to keep pace with expanding population.

Chicano academics, Arce notes somewhat sardonically, exhibit a "cultural tenacity and ethnic commitment [which] are neither as strong nor as uniform as is often suggested by ethnic spokesmen in the literature or in conferences."[71] This same tentativeness is itself, in part at least, a reflection of the peripheral character of Chicanos' participation in higher education: "Whether one refers to Chicano institutions or Chicano programs or Chicano personnel or students, they are all on the periphery, in terms of participation in governance, academic credibility and status, resource allocation, permanence, and facilities . . . . "

The Chicano communities themselves have not done much to change the picture. Arce points out that the few Chicano-run institutions concentrate on helping undergraduates and "are not likely to produce or support any Chicano scholars and most may not want to, even if they had the capabilities and resources."[72]

Thus, higher education has not been, for Chicanos, a vital experience leading to widespread involvement on all levels. Nor has it been a means of greater collective self-knowledge through sustained scholarship. Arce concludes: "The role of higher education vis-a-vis Chicanos has been that of a colonizing mechanism." In this sense, it has benefitted scattered individuals and has dulled social protest by many more. And it has been largely unconcerned with the many serious problems of the Chicano in American society.

## Desegregation

Patrick E. McBurnette and James W. Kunetka conducted a very preliminary and restricted study of Mexican American students in desegregated schools in five Texas cities: Houston, San Antonio, Lockhart, McAllen, and Waxachachie. Only 99 Anglo and Chicano students were surveyed. About the only warranted conclusion one could arrive at from the study is that there seems to be much verbal harrassment between Chicano and Anglo students. Just how conflicts arise, their significance, and how they are distributed — nothing of this is clarified.[73]

71. Ibid., p. 17. 72. Ibid., p. 18.
73. Patrick E. McBurnette and James W. Kunetka, *Mexican American Perceptions of Isolation in Desegregated School Settings*, April 1976 (ERIC ED 121 555)

# Observations

Social science research is notoriously ahistorical. In this tradition the study of minority education, however, is a puzzle without attention to historical roots. These roots, like all others, are extremely tangled. They reach into other growths, making it impossible to treat a single subject in isolation. Minorities in American life bear a distinctive relationship to the political and economic institutions of the country. Therefore, a study of minority education leads inevitably to the broader social picture. Structures of segregation and deprivation were a long time building. While one can tell something about a dwelling without examining the foundation, it is advisable to find out all you can about it before moving in.

The six historical works reviewed above succeed well in establishing the historical nature of some important educational problems.

One dominant theme is the economic decline of Mexican Americans while the larger economy expanded during the nineteenth century. This was seen to be the case in both Los Angeles and Santa Barbara. In a real sense, few Mexican Americans gained directly from the larger economic expansion. As a consequence, Mexican American history cannot be approached from a European immigrant perspective of "from rags to riches." In each instance studied, Mexican Americans occupied the lowest rung of southwestern rural and urban society. Courses and teaching units on the history of Mexican Americans need to come to grips with this historic reality.

Another theme concerns the language problem in school. Griswold del Castillo's account is clearest on the persistent efforts of Mexican American parents to gain bilingual instruction for their children, as early as the 1850s. The reception they met with hardly differed from that of a century later. Bilingualism has a more ancient lineage than is generally recognized, as has the anti-bilingual sentiment. The latter won out decisively; as Post points out, in one Texas high school speaking Spanish was forbidden until 1972.

Still another point of interest is the educational role of the Catholic Church. In sketches of the historic culture of Mexican Americans much attention is usually paid the subject of Catholicism. But the discussion is often restricted to Catholicism as a religious value; the institutional history of the Church is slighted. As is clear from the historical materials, the Church never aimed at nor achieved mass education in the Southwest. It was somewhat more open to bilingual education but for a rather selective enrollment. In more recent years, with the financial crisis of Church schools, the patronage of these schools has narrowed even more, in a social and ethnic sense. The opposition of the Church to public school expansion in areas of large Catholic population was not, however, peculiar to the Southwest. Around the turn of the century, this view was still widespread in Catholic circles.

The problem of the educational quality of Mexican American schooling is a long-standing one. There were no "good old days" of high-quality mass education of Mexican Americans. Attendance of Mexican American children in the schools of Los Angeles before the Civil War was relatively high, but as noted earlier, literacy among Mexican Americans was lagging even a century ago. There is abundant historical evidence relating to the institutionalizing of low achievement by Mexican Americans. This would include Gonzales' material about Los Angeles, as well as Post's on two Texas towns, and other studies cited elsewhere in this issue.

The studies of social mobility and assimilation deal with a topic that is very familiar in the literature. They are concerned largely with income levels, occupational choice, and ethnic self-concept. All in all, the upward strivers seem to entertain modest life goals; they are not aiming at the sky. Perhaps this is more an adjustment to the limited opportunities available to them than an expression of some cultural restraint indigenous to Mexican Americans.

Ethnic identity means something different to each researcher: language used by self and one's family, geographical nearness to the nuclear family, interaction with others of one's own group, celebration of traditional holidays, physical appearance and location of dwelling. One gains from the studies a conception of culture that is somewhat amorphous, even fragmented at times. In any case, it is difficult to grasp precisely the subject of ethnic character.

An older, rather romantic conception of assimilation suggests that the poor are more culturally authentic and don't "need" to assimilate. What's more, they were believed to lack any economic motive to assimilate. Since none of the studies deals with the poor, it is not possible to judge whether any of the findings are peculiar to the middle-income upward strivers or whether upward-striving itself is unique to middle-income persons.

Unfortunately, the exigencies of writing a doctoral dissertation usually dictate that when there is a choice between a need to complete the work and a need to encompass many factors, the former will win out. But much of the published material in this research field also reflects the same problem.

Few researchers have come to grips with a further issue which hovers over the investigations. This is the matter of the form of Mexican American culture in the long run. Lopez comes close to saying that if racism and poverty were to disappear, Mexican American ethnic consciousness would be severely weakened. Most of the other researchers adopt a very different view, taking for granted the endurance of Mexican American culture without regard to its eventual configuration.

Both the historical and social mobility studies afford a glimpse into the operation of community power on a local scale. Post's case study of two towns enables us to study the process in contemporary detail and in historical perspective at the same time. (It is a valuable

work, matched in the literature only by Parsons' 1965 study of Castroville, California.[74]) Especially important is the fact that Post clarifies the political nature of the school. In a time when charges are heard about this or that group using the schools "for political purposes" it is well to be reminded that this is quite unexceptionable.

Indeed, political action by Mexican Americans is on its way to becoming a community norm, at least in South Texas where they are concentrated. The schools are bound to reflect this situation and so we may well look forward to significant changes in the schools. But in another respect, change is bound to be slow. Post stresses throughout his work that Anglo control derives from ownership of the economic power centers of the community, with Chicanos playing a subordinate economic role. From Post's account, it is not clear that RUP and other Chicano political movements have yet disturbed the traditional basis of Anglo control.

The practical import of Post's work lies not in the realm of classroom instruction so much as in the area of reorienting school personnel.

The Casavantes and Frieder-Vierra studies deal with the narrower question of academic achievement of Mexican American children. Casavantes' work rests on a possibly unsteady base since he utilizes reading outcomes from several states without the benefit of standardized scores. Instead, he used principals' estimates. Nevertheless, his main point is at least plausible and very possibly quite correct: non-promotion of minority students yields no discernible educational benefit. Frieder-Vierra's findings, like so many others in educational research, cry out for interpretation in order to convert them into usable guideposts to school policy.

The remaining works represent single studies of restricted aspects of a broad subject and are thus difficult to discuss in a meaningful way.

74. See Theodore W. Parsons, Jr., *Ethnic Cleavage in a California School* (doctoral diss., Stanford University, 1965). (University Microfilms Order No. 66-2602).

# Puerto Ricans

Thus far, exceedingly few educational researchers have shown an interest in the problems of Puerto Rican education. The printed literature is sparse. Following are reports on a handful of studies that have appeared in the last few years.[1]

Late last year the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights released a report which gives an overview of the principal problems of Puerto Rican communities on the mainland.[2] One of the longest chapters deals with education. Much of it is devoted to statistical data. The substantive problems are uniformly serious.

"The dropout rate is more severe among Puerto Rican youngsters born on the Island than among those youngsters of Puerto Rican parentage born on the mainland,"[3] writes the Commission. On the critical issue of language used in school, the Commission comes down hard on English as a Second Language (ESL) programs:[4]

> By themselves, ESL programs are very limited since they use only English to teach literacy and communication rather than the student's native language to transmit concepts and skills (which might facilitate the learning of English). ESL students inevitably fall behind in the regular classroom, where content courses are being taught.

The commission is not impressed with the extent of the influence of Puerto Rican parents or with the employment of Puerto Rican staff in the New York City public schools: "Recent modest increases in Puerto Rican teachers and administrators in New York City may be partially due to decentralization, but parental involvement in important school decisions remains limited."[5]

The report also deals with higher education: "In 1970, 45 percent of college-age youth in the U.S. were reported to be engaged in higher education, compared with 15 to 20 percent of blacks, and only 5 percent of Puerto Ricans."[6] Most of the latter, of course, attended the City University of New York (CUNY). As a result of the recent imposition of tuition and other restrictive measures at CUNY, undoubtedly significantly fewer Puerto Rican students are now enrolled. Thus, the Commission's 5 percent figure is now an overestimate.

Two research studies concern the politics of education in New York City. For one thing, the Migration Division of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, an official body once of central importance among Puerto Ricans in New York City, was found to have lost its

1. Earlier research is reported in Chapter 11 of Meyer Weinberg, *Minority Students: A Research Appraisal* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1977).
2. U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, *Puerto Ricans in the Continental United States: An Uncertain Future* (Washington, D.C.: The Commission, October 1976).
3. *Ibid.*, p. 96. 4. *Ibid.*, p. 102
5. *Ibid.*, p. 110. 6. *Ibid.*, p. 123.

leadership role in the area of education. The anti-poverty agencies have become the new power. Rosa Estades writes: "The leadership role . . . is centralized and flows predominantly from anti-poverty agencies."[7] Francisco Castro is not quite so sweeping. In discussing the origins of the community control movement among Puerto Ricans, he writes: "While it cannot be maintained that the movement toward community control was the exclusive outgrowth of anti-poverty group activity, it can be said, that if these agencies had not provided the funds, manpower and equipment, the community control movement would have encountered many difficulties."[8]

The New York state decentralization statute of 1969 divided the city's schools into thirty-one community school districts. In certain respects, the local districts exercised authority but the central city board of education continued to control every major area. From 1969 to 1971, Castro studied the operation of two community districts: East Harlem (No. 4) and South Bronx (No. 7). Puerto Rican students made up 64 percent of the former and 86 percent of the latter.

Academic achievement was exceedingly poor among the 50,000 students in both districts. In East Harlem, Castro writes, "all the schools . . . reported two to two and one-half years average retardation in math in the last set of scores."[9] In fifteen of the district's eighteen elementary schools, more than 80 percent of the children score below grade level in reading. On the other hand, in the eighteen elementary schools in South Bronx, "there was marked improvement since 1967 in reading levels."[10]

Decentralization has broadened the span of influence in both communities. Among the forty-one "influentials," for example, ten are women. This is a considerable departure from the Island norm of male leadership. An analysis of the sex composition of persons occupying the highest positions in the most influential community group makes this even clearer: there were eight men and five women. Grass roots representation has not, however, meant a devaluation of traditional criteria of leadership such as formal education. Of the twenty-four top influentials, fourteen had college degrees; of these, eight had done some graduate work. Over three-quarters of this group had been born in Puerto Rico.

The school decentralization movement is, in Castro's view, a departure from age-old political patterns in New York City. "For many years," he declares, "politics has meant manipulation and paternalism for Puerto Ricans."[11]

Two studies revolve around the language of instruction.

Russell Glen Layden made one study in New Jersey which involved fifty-six third graders in an almost all-Puerto Rican school. Half were taught in English and half in Spanish. The study

7. Rosa Estades, *Patterns of Political Participation of Puerto Ricans in New York City* (doctoral diss., New School for Social Research, 1974), p. 169. (University Microfilms Order No. 74-26,961).
8. Francisco Castro, *The Politics of Local Education in New York City: A Puerto Rican View* (doctoral diss., Rutgers University, 1973), p. 70. (University Microfilms Order No. 73,32,200).
9. *Ibid.*, p. 46.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 50.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 1.

extended over only ten weeks. Layden sought not only to discover any instructional advantage for one or the other language, but also whether the use of Spanish affected self-concept positively.

He found that overall academic achievement was not affected by the language used in classroom instruction nor was there any significant self-concept effect. The data did demonstrate that "the democratic climate of a Puerto Rican child's classroom is enhanced when the native language (Spanish) is utilized as the medium of instruction rather than a non-native language (English)."[12] The significance of Layden's finding about democratic climate is difficult to evaluate. He explains the importance of such a classroom climate since "a secure accepting environment should tend to lessen a child's anxieties and free him to concentrate on the primary function of the classroom, the task of learning."[13] If this were so, the children being taught in Spanish should have excelled in mastering the task of learning to read. Yet, Layden reports that the group taught in English excelled in reading achievement. It might well be that a ten-week experimental period is too short a time to test the weighty goals of the research.

Dorothy Karpel Popper studied self-concept and occupational choice among sixty-six Puerto Rican girls in the sixth grade of two New York City elementary schools in a poor, predominantly Puerto Rican area. All the professional staff in both schools was non-Puerto Rican although a number of paraprofessionals and aides spoke Spanish. Whether they had high or low self-concepts, the girls tended to make conventional career choices:[14]

> The choices . . . were limited mainly to teacher, nurse, and secretary and expected for this age group. They were also sex-stereotyped, consistent with what the children had been exposed to in their books at school, the media, and in the world around them.

On the other hand, one-third of the students chose nontraditional careers such as geologist, marine biologist, and writer.

High self concept as such did not lead to the choice of non-traditional occupations. Instead, the high self-concept girls simply "appeared to feel that they could make their wishes come true."[15] Clearly, unless the school or other salient informational sources acquaint girls with a broad range of occupational choices opening to women, they may feel good about themselves but are fated to follow well-worn career paths.

Popper also notes a failing of the scale that was used in her study. "The Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale . . . was developed from an item pool of children's concerns, but," she observes, "it did not include Puerto Rican children in the normative or reliability

12. Russell Glenn Layden, *The Relationship Between the Language of Instruction and the Development of Self-Concept, Classroom Climate and Achievement of Spanish-Speaking Puerto Rican Children* (doctoral diss., University of Maryland, 1972), p. 120. (University Microfilms Order No. 73-9704).
13. *Ibid.*, p. 134.
14. Dorothy Karpel Popper, *The Relationship of Self-Concept to Congruence Among Self, Ideal Self, and Occupational Self in Sixth Grade Puerto Rican Girls In An Inner-City Poverty Area* (doctoral diss., Fordham University, 1975), p. 60. (University Microfilms Order No. 75-18,922). 15. *Ibid.*, p. 50.

studies." This is a disturbing feature of many test instruments used in self-concept research. One can only guess at its significance.

This observation leads to a related issue: the cultural appropriateness or inappropriateness of standardized tests for minority children. Three studies are germane.

Sylvia Cruz and associates studied the results of administering Spanish- and English-language versions of the Metropolitan Readiness Test (MRT) to 100 Puerto Rican kindergarten children in four Connecticut cities. On the whole, scores were significantly higher on the Spanish version; this was true for the total score and for all subtests except Alphabet and Copying. Dividing the children into English-only and bilingual classes, "the [test] means for the Spanish version significantly surpassed those for the English version on all sub-tests except Copying."[16]

The researchers caution against viewing translated versions of tests as a panacea:[17]

> The findings . . . are not interpreted as a recommendation for the wholesale translation of standardized tests into Spanish for use with Spanish-speaking children . . . . Differences between the lexicon, morphology, syntax, and phonology of the respective languages and dialects plus underlying cultural contrasts prelude translations from being the final answer.

(Indeed, in some studies no significant difference in scores was found between the two language versions.) But to Cruz and her associates, the findings of their study "point to the need for recognizing and reflecting the native linguistic-cultural background of Spanish-speaking students in all aspects of the instruction offered by our public schools."

At the University of Puerto Rico, Roberto Morán analyzed the suitability of the Spanish-language Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC), a widely-used IQ test. He pointed out that the mean score on the Puerto Rican version was 88.01 and that on the English version, 100. But instead of the test makers' restandardizing the Puerto Rican norms based on Puerto Rican scores, many continue to use the American norms, Morán writes:[18]

> Most teachers and parents (and even some psychologists) believe that the average person's IQ is 100. Thus, when reporting the IQs of children tested on the adapted [Spanish-language] WISC, who score within the average range, i.e., 77-99, the immediate conclusion reached by parents or teachers is that such children are to be classified as subnormal.

Apparently, this misconception is shared by many.

The essential problem is this: For whatever reason, Puerto Rican

16. Sylvia Cruz, Ines Heinrihar, Rose Quezeda, and Perry Zirkel. "Spanish-Speaking Students and the Language Factor in the MRT," *Integrateducation*, 13 (November-December 1975), p. 43. 17. *Ibid.*, p. 44.
18. Roberto E. Morán, *Observations and Recommendations on the Puerto Rican Version of the Weschsler Intelligence Scale for Children*, February 1974, p. 6. (ERIC ED 088 932).

children do "worse" on the adapted WISC than other children do on the original WISC. This does *not* mean they are "dumber" but that the norms derived from the original WISC are inappropriate for Puerto Rican children. In this case, Morán is saying, the seemingly uniform unit measures of IQ are not actually uniform.

Thus, in fact, Morán calculates, "a Puerto Rican IQ of 76 is equivalent to an American one of 91.5 or approximately 92."[19] Mainland schools perpetrate a great injustice and make an educational mistake when they place a child scoring in the 70-80 IQ range in a room for slow learners. Morán urges that the norms of the original WISC be restandardized with the use of a more representative sample, including Puerto Rican children.

Use of another widely used IQ test, Raven's Progressive Matrices, produced a different result. Louise Corman and Milton Budoff administered this non-verbal test to Spanish- and English-speaking children. There was no significant difference in outcomes between the two groups of children.[20] Urban Puerto Rican children in Massachusetts made up the sample. Here, then, is an example of a test failing to penalize children of varying cultural backgrounds. (Some earlier studies, it should be noted, have come to different conclusions about the Raven.)

Another researcher from the University of Puerto Rico, Ishver S. Bangdiwala, recently updated a 1966 study by the Superior Educational Council's Division of Educational Research. This study had found a rigid class division among school children in Puerto Rico by type of school attended. The earlier study established that about 95 percent of the enrollment of the Island's private schools consisted of upper and upper middle class students while nearly 80 percent of urban and 99 percent of rural public school enrollment consisted of lower-middle and lower class students. Examining 1973 figures, Bangdiwala found the situation had eased slightly but remained essentially the same.

For years, wealthier students, especially graduates of private schools, have enrolled in disproportionately large numbers in the University of Puerto Rico. Bangdiwala found the same trends continuing. In 1973, for example, 77 percent of all junior and senior high school students on the Island were in public schools; the remainder were in private schools. In Fall, 1973, on the main campus of the University, the following was found to be the case:[21]

| *Graduates* | *Applicants* | *Admittees* |
|---|---|---|
| Public schools | 72% | 64% |
| Private schools | 28% | 36% |

Thus, the elitist character of Puerto Rican higher education is as tenacious as it had been delineated in the earlier works of Nieves Falcon.[22]

19. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
20. Louise Corman and Milton Budoff, "Factor Structures of Spanish-Speaking and Non-Spanish-Speaking Children on Raven's Progressive Matrices," *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 34 (Winter 1974), p. 979.
21. Ishver S. Bangdiwala, *The Effect of Socio-Economic Levels on Selected Educational Factors in Puerto Rico*, June 1974, p. 61, (ERIC ED 097 262).
22. See Luis Nieves Falcon, *Reclutamiento para la Educación Superior en Puerto Rico, 1940-1960* (Rio Piedras: Editorial Universitaria, Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1965).

A rather new type of educational literature has made its appearance: needs-assessments of Spanish-speaking children. In one case, a survey was made by La Raza Citizens Advisory Committee for the Michigan State Board of Education. While the report is undocumented, it brings together a good deal of material that should give educators pause. It reports high school dropout rates in five selected Michigan cities as follows:[23]

| | *Percent* |
|---|---|
| Pontiac | 90 |
| Saginaw | 70 |
| Lansing | 68 |
| Flint | 67 |
| Detroit | 50 |

On another point, the report states "in the Holland Public Schools, 43.5 percent of the students in the special education tracking programs are Spanish-speaking and are so placed because of their low test scores on their IQ exams."[24]

Another type of needs-assessment study is one made by Northern Illinois University which serves twenty-three northern counties of the state. The report is a handy collection of statistical material, some hitherto unpublished, relating to educational problems of the Spanish-speaking.[25]

23. Carlos Falcon and others, *Quality Educational Services to Michigan's Spanish Speaking Community*, January 1974, p. 11. (ERIC ED 097 177).
24. *Ibid.*, p. 25.
25. Orlando G. Baca, *Selected Characteristics of the Spanish-Origin Population in Illinois and Some Related Educational Trends with Reference to Northern Illinois University and Its Service Area*. September 1975. (ERIC ED 122 093).

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